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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 9 November 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian SSR)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (A/45/25; E/1990/120, E/1990/121 and E/1990/122 and Corr.1; E/1990/L.56)

Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its second special session (A/45/25)

Mr. TOLBA (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme) said that the large number of participants attending the second special session of the UNEP Governing Council, held from 1 to 3 August 1990, was evidence of the importance the international community attached to serious environmental problems and their impact on development everywhere. While everyone agreed that the best way to protect the environment was through sustainable development, differences emerged as to the specific measures to be taken to achieve that end. Nevertheless, the Governing Council had reached consensus on 12 key decisions. Those decisions fell into three categories: the role of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; strengthening the role of UNEP and its Governing Council; and guidance from the Council on priority environmental issues.

With regard to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, it was expected that the Conference would chart a new course for integrating economic growth and development and environmental protection. It should identify ways to implement specific costed activities and stimulate reforms in such diverse areas as agriculture, trade, energy and public finance. Current modes of development were responsible for environmental degradation. Although conceptual frameworks for the necessary reforms existed, the task remained a demanding one, since it involved translating talk about sustainable development into focused and effective policies and initiatives.

In its decision SS.II/9, the UNEP Governing Council had recommended that the Preparatory Committee should consider various specific issues: efforts to combat

(Mr. Tolba)

land degradation; the need for new and additional resources on concessionary terms with a view to the adoption and implementation of pollution-free technologies; actions to introduce environmental considerations into sectoral policies; and developments relating to agreements for the transfer of technology, taking into account the needs of the developing countries. The Governing Council had also reaffirmed the Programme's commitment to contributing fully to the work of the Preparatory Committee.

With regard to strengthening the role of UNEP and its Governing Council, he had been requested to report on the feasibility of: expanding the membership of the Governing Council; establishing an executive committee of the Council; holding joint meetings with the UNDP Governing Council; and giving the Council a role in environmental conciliation, conflict resolution and monitoring the implementation of environmental agreements and decisions.

The Governing Council had also requested him to report on ways and means to further enhance the visibility of UNEP activities by establishing a United Nations centre for urgent environmental assistance, an early warning system for risks of environmental degradation and a global environmental academy and by mobilizing an international "green brigade" of volunteers.

For the first time, the Environment Fund budget had exceeded the $30-$40 million mark. The Governing Council had decided to set the target for contributions at $100 million, to be reached by 1992. However, that target was already being viewed as too modest in terms of the task at hand. He intended to justify to the Governing Council his proposal to increase the Fund budget to $250 million by 1995. He would also propose the establishment of several special funds, such as the fund established recently to implement the provisions of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Negotiations were also well under way with potential donors for the establishment of a global environmental facility comprising 1 billion special drawing rights, the operation of which would be co-ordinated by the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP. At its second regular session of 1991, the Economic and Social Council would consider the conclusions reached on that subject by the Governing Council at its sixteenth session.

READEX FICHE

(Mr. Tolba)

Finally, the Governing Council had provided policy guidance on priority environmental issues. At the recent meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol in London, the international community had demonstrated its sense of collective responsibility for the depletion of the ozone layer; it must now endeavour to solve the greatest threat to humanity: climate change and global warming. In that connection, the Governing Council had adopted a decision which dealt with the Second World Climate Conference, continuation of the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the launching of negotiations for a framework convention on climate change. The General Assembly would provide guidance on the recommendations formulated at the preparatory meeting for the convention. Finally, the Governing Council had requested him to give high priority to the preparation of an international legal instrument on biological diversity. Other decisions taken by the Governing Council dealt with the management of hazardous wastes, protection of ocean and coastal areas, desertification and hazardous substances.

Negotiations in those areas would not be successful without the active participation of all developing countries, made possible by financial support from the developed countries. Far more resources were needed to tackle environmental problems than anything mobilized to date. The time had come for the international community to make a firm commitment to sustained collective action.

The Council took note of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on the work of its second special session.

Note verbale dated 27 September 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (E/1990/121)

Mr. GOSHU (Ethiopia) recalled that Ethiopia had a long tradition of hosting refugees regardless of their place of origin or their religion. The flow of refugees had suddenly accelerated in 1983, with more than 800,000 currently in the country. Ethiopia was thus the first country of asylum and ranked fifth world-wide in so far as the number of refugees was concerned. That influx and the need to respond to the resulting humanitarian conditions had placed a considerable burden on Ethiopia's economy, which had already been shaken by drought, famine and internal conflicts. The assistance provided by the United Nations High

(Mr. Goshu, Ethiopia)

Commissioner for Refugees had prevented the situation from becoming a tragedy. Ethiopia therefore followed with keen interest the work of the Executive Committee and had participated in that work for many years as an observer. He hoped that the Council would recommend an enlargement of the membership of the Executive Committee so that Ethiopia might be represented in it and participate fully in efforts to solve the problem of refugees in the Horn of Africa.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the following draft decision:

"The Economic and Social Council decides to refer the note verbale dated 27 September 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (E/1990/121) to its organizational session for 1991 for consideration within the context of its programme of work for 1991."

The draft decision suggested by the President was adopted.

Change of dates of the thirty-second session of the Commission for Social Development (E/1990/122 and Corr.1)

The PRESIDENT said that, for technical reasons, it had been proposed that the dates of the thirty-second session of the Commission for Social Development, to be held at Vienna, should be changed to 11-20 February 1991 instead of 13-22 February, as originally scheduled. That change would have no financial implications. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the change of dates.

It was so decided.

Change of dates and venue of the Tenth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (E/1990/L.56)

The PRESIDENT said that, for the reasons set out in document E/1990/L.56, the Secretariat had proposed that the Tenth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance should be held at Geneva from 18 to 25 September 1991 instead of at Headquarters from 30 January to 8 February 1991. The financial implications of that change were contained in paragraph 3 of document E/1990/L.56 and thus would not be issued as a separate document. In addition, the phrase "and substantive servicing expenditures of

(The President)

$16,000" should be inserted in paragraph 3 of that document between the figure "$88,900" and the words "and that these".

Mr. HARRISON (United Kingdom) said he did not have strong objections to the change of dates, but wondered why it was necessary to change the venue of the Meeting. That was contrary to the rules governing the holding of meetings, and he wondered why holding the Meeting at Geneva would facilitate the participation of the specialized agencies. Besides, if all services and facilities at Headquarters were reserved for the General Assembly while that body was in session, the Meeting of Experts could take place in early September.

Mr. OYUGI (Department of Technical Co-operation for Development) said that the specialized agencies, whose substantive contribution was important, wanted the Meeting to be held at Geneva so that they could be represented at the appropriate level; in fact, experience showed that it was easier to ensure their full participation if the Meeting was held there. His Department had also been informed that it would be difficult to hold the Meeting in New York. The Department would be able to absorb fully any additional expenditures.

The choice of dates had been dictated by a desire to take into account the outcome of three important meetings, dealing with the environment, women's participation in management and the evaluation of the public administration programme for sub-Saharan African countries.

Mr. SHAPOVALOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), supporting the views of the representative of the United Kingdom, remarked that it was certainly of interest to have the results of those meetings, but that the meeting should be held in New York to avoid additional costs.

Mr. DJOGHLAF (Algeria) suggested that, to save time, the Council should decide immediately that the Meeting would be held in September and should postpone its decision on the exact date and venue until the organizational session for 1991.

It was so decided.

Emergency assistance to Samoa, American Samoa, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna

Mr. BEHRSTOCK (Asia and Eastern Pacific Division, UNDP), reporting on the implementation of resolution 1990/1, used Samoa as an example. Assistance had been provided in four areas: emergency humanitarian aid; long-term aid in

(Mr. Behrstock)

reconstruction; assistance to the country for identifying its needs; and mobilization of additional resources.

The international community had reacted with speed and generosity. Australia, New Zealand and the United States in particular had sent immediate help. Besides bilateral aid, Samoa had received assistance from the United Nations system and various multilateral institutions.

So far as long-term aid for reconstruction and rehabilitation of devastated areas was concerned, a round table had been held at Geneva in May 1990, to assess the donors' response to the Economic and Social Council's appeal. The Samoan Government had submitted documentation on its needs, describing four projects, two of which might receive assistance from Japan. For its part, the Asia Development Bank had reallocated one of its agricultural development loans to reconstruction. UNDP had approved an allocation of 300,000 dollars for a water supply project. Pleased with those results, he stressed the usefulness of round tables, which facilitated the identification of needs and co-ordination of donor assistance. Other round tables would be held for Tonga and Tuvalu, which had received an immediate UNDP grant of 35,000 dollars.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the following draft decision:

"The Economic and Social Council adopts the report of the Head of the Asia and Eastern Pacific Division of the United Nations Development Programme concerning emergency assistance to Samoa, American Samoa, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna".

The draft decision as submitted by the President was adopted.

CO-ORDINATION QUESTIONS

Report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of the second part of its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part II))

Mr. ŁBRASZENSKI (Chairman, Committee for Programme and Co-ordination), introducing its report on the work of the second part of its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part II)), recalled first that the Committee had acted upon the request of the Council in paragraph 5 of its resolution 1990/83.

Council members would remember that programme 11 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 had been adopted on the condition that one of its

(Mr. Abraszenski)

subprogrammes, concerning African economic recovery and development, should become a separate programme. Consequently, the Secretariat had established programme 45, entitled "African economic recovery, development and transformation". The Committee had recommended adoption of that programme with some modifications.

As for programme 31, "Regional co-operation for development in Asia and the Pacific", CPC had recommended that the General Assembly should give appropriate consideration to the question of priority setting among subprogrammes when it reviewed that programme. The representative of the Secretary-General had announced recently to the Fifth Committee that he would submit more detailed information and new proposals regarding the medium-term plan for 1992-1997.

In conclusion, he noted that for some time CPC had experienced very great difficulty in reviewing all the items on its agenda within the time allotted. He hoped that a practical solution to remedy that situation could be found.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the following draft decision:

"The Economic and Social Council decides (a) to adopt the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of the second part of its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part II)), and (b) to adopt the conclusions and recommendations it contains concerning programme 45 (African economic recovery, development and transformation) and programme 31 (Regional co-operation for development in Asia and the Pacific)."

The draft decision as suggested by the President was adopted.

Report of the Chairmen of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the twenty-fifth series of joint meetings of the two committees (E/1990/123)

Mr. KOIKE (Japan) expressed his appreciation for the work of the joint meetings and thought that the General Assembly could make use of the conclusions of the report concerning improvement of co-ordination in the United Nations system and prevention of natural disasters. He proposed, therefore, that the Council should not simply adopt the report but rather transmit it to the General Assembly for consideration under the relevant agenda items.

Mr. MAJOLI (Italy) was pleased to note that the ideas put forward by his delegation were reflected in paragraph 37. It was indeed necessary to keep donor countries fully informed of the financial requirements for the Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and contributions to the special Trust Fund for the Decade would depend on progress made in implementation of its activities. Italy had already contributed to the Fund, but hoped to see the results before deciding on any further contribution. Italy considered it appropriate to enhance co-ordination with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, adding that the Decade's secretariat should be modestly staffed.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the following draft decision:

"The Economic and Social Council adopts the report of the Chairmen of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the twenty-fifth series of joint meetings of the two committees and transmits this report to the General Assembly for consideration under the relevant agenda items."

The draft decision as submitted by the President was adopted.

The Council thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 10.

ELECTIONS

Elections carried over from previous sessions

Committee on Natural Resources

The PRESIDENT announced that Sweden had informed the Secretariat that it would be a candidate for one of the vacant posts allocated to the Group of Western European and Other States, for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 1991.

There being no other candidates, Sweden was elected by acclamation.

The PRESIDENT announced that, for the other vacancies for which elections had been carried over to later sessions, the Secretariat had not been informed of any candidature by the chairmen of the regional groups or by the OAU secretariat or the Group of African States. In the absence of any candidatures, he suggested that those elections should be carried over to a later session.

It was so decided.

Elections held following the reunification of the German Democratic Republic with the Federal Republic of Germany

Committee on Human Settlements

The PRESIDENT announced that the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that it supported the candidacy of Poland for the vacancy which had occurred, for the period from the date of election to 31 December 1991.

There being no other candidatures, Poland was elected by acclamation.

Commission on Transnational Corporations

The PRESIDENT announced that the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that it supported the candidature of Romania for the vacancy which had occurred, for the period from the date of election to 31 December 1992.

There being no other candidatures, Romania was elected by acclamation.

Commission on the Status of Women

The PRESIDENT announced that the President of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that it supported the candidature of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic for the vacancy which had occurred, for the period from the date of election to 31 December 1991.

There being no other candidatures, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was elected by acclamation.

UNICEF Governing Council

The PRESIDENT recalled that the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that it supported the candidature of Czechoslovakia for the vacancy which had occurred, for the period from the date of election to 31 July 1993.

There being no other candidatures, Czechoslovakia was elected by acclamation.

World Food Council

The PRESIDENT recalled that the Council was required to nominate a member for election by the General Assembly, for a term starting on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 1991. The Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that it supported the candidature of Yugoslavia for that nomination.

There being no other candidatures, Yugoslavia was nominated by acclamation.

Committee on Natural Resources

The PRESIDENT announced that the Secretariat had not been informed of any candidatures by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States and suggested that the election should be carried over to a later session.

It was so decided.

Election held as a result of the withdrawal of Mexico

Committee for Programme and Co-ordination

The PRESIDENT announced that the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had informed the Secretariat that, Mexico having withdrawn, the Group supported the candidature of Brazil for nomination by the Council for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1991.

There being no other candidatures, Brazil was nominated by acclamation.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The PRESIDENT declared closed the resumed second regular session of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.